854 mosquitos, but then Song bought in Mīnburī a bamboo frame with be-flowered netting. He also bought little mits to tie onto the baby's hands, so the fingers would not be sucked. Not every baby got these! Most of the time the baby lay naked, but was wrapped when nursed. One cool day they put over him a thick blanket. Lek, Duan, or Song bathed him in boiled water 3 times a day and always after his excretions, which were wiped off with cloths. Then fresh cloth was put under him. On the seventh day since he was thriving, he was bathed in ordinary rain water. Every day Lek vigor- [856] ously squeezed his fingers and legs "to make them straight," which made him yell each time. To speed the drying of the [278] cord, a charred leaf of betel pepper was applied for a while to his navel on which Dūan spit saliva several times a day.

853 Dūan's milk supply was only fair. For milk stimulation they pressed her nipples and kept the fire hot. She was [262] also taking daily a special nursing curry of banana flower and vegetables (khaēng līang). One day she ate a cobra curry. A neighbor offered to help nurse the baby but Duan refused. "It is a pitiful sight to see one's child at [854] another's breast." Whenever the baby wailed he was given boiled water but was not necessarily at once picked up. If his crying continued, however, Dūan washed her breasts with warm water, pressed out and threw away a little milk, moistened the baby's lips with water, then lifted him on the pillow to her plank. She laid him beside her and leaned over him to nurse, though occasionally took him in her arms. He was nursed about 10 times a day, and also received honey, boiled water, and a bit of banana, too. [278] One day the baby cried a lot, so they painted him with turmeric and gave him baked cobra tail in alcohol to warm him up.

846 As to her own diet, Dūan followed the usual practice 262 of limiting herself rigidly to rice with salt, dried fish, and baked khūai namwā banana. Egg was too cooling: "like glutinous rice, it brought pus to the unhealed cord and the vaginal wound." Dūan also avoided "jam" bean which caused madness, fruit, and sweets. Whatever she ate affected her child by secreting into her milk. If she were sick, he would be so too. If he alone became ill, she must watch the foods both he and she ate. All these food instructions would stop only when nursing stopped a year or two later.

846 Duan decided to stay only 11 days by the fire, though Sāi had said 13 and she would have liked to stay longer. However, she wanted to get back to work because the transplanting season was approaching. Besides, the

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A major clustering of first experiences, and so of habit formation, was in intra-uterine existence. Every experience of the mother was shared by the fetus. After birth, a baby daily formed habits of eating, sleeping, and crying, and later, as a child, habits of respect, obedience, truth-telling, etc. To create good habits efforts were bent to control and ameliorate any first experience: to make it as correct as possible; to seek out favorable astrological moments; to ask auspicious, skilled, or learned persons to be part of the initial action. An example was the establishment of nursing. When the baby was put to the breast the first time, the objective was not nourishment but to establish a good habit, viz. copious and strong sucking from an ample milk supply. Only after this first nursing did breast-milk as nourishment become important. If on this occasion he did not nurse well, he would have the habit of eating poorly all his life. Moreover, whatever the mother's experience with her first-born, it would not only be repeated every time he nursed, but set the nursing pattern for all subsequent children she bore. For her first-born, though, a mother would have had no previous experience of making milk. She had to be taught, or shown, how to make good milk, just as the baby had to be taught to suck, and later taught to eat rice. Consequently, the first-born baby was almost always first nursed by another person (not necessarily a kinswoman) with copious milk. Then 2 or 3 days later, because the example had been set, good milk came in and the mother started nursing. What was to be avoided at all costs was a first suck of colostrum, which appeared to be "unfit, early milk" from an insufficiently lactating breast. This would be a poor precedent. Until a mother decided her milk was right for nursing, a baby subsisted usually on honey and water, and maybe a little crushed banana. If a woman were not satisfied with her nursing capacities for her first-born child, when the second child was born she might ask another lactating woman to give the baby a first nursing so as to improve her own habit.[42] One woman flatly said her own milk was always unfit as proved by her babies' health, so she used a bottle of (canned) cow's milk from the start. She felt she had the habit

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42. Bradley (79-80) felt that the dehydration attendant on lying by the hot fire significantly reduced the quantity and quality of the milk.

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called out "Mine!" ("khǭng chan" [female speaking] or "phom" [male speaking]). Never did a parent call "oure!"[44] Sometimes the mother might ask a relative or friend present to claim the child, and so become a godparent.

As the first human step to control the volatile khwan, the first objective of winnowing a baby was to seize it (kan rap khwan) and so "complete" the child's person.[45] By tying holy thread at the wrist and ankle soul-exits, the khwan which had flitted in and out of the womb was given root. It was still flighty, but now it had a life-long home.

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Secondly, the child was given membership in a human family. Connection through blood and semen did not establish kinship. At first, the child hovered between corporeal and non-corporeal existence. "The child is not fully human for the first 3 days." This period was under the supernatural control of Mother Sǭ, for babies "never died during the first 3 days after birth. They might be born dead or they died 6 or 7 days later." The shock of dropping the child on the tray "made him forget his life as a spirit." When someone cried "mine!" the child finally cut his relationship with the spirit-world. As an old woman explained, "The ties are the important part [of the ceremony]. They show that the child belongs to someone. Once a tie fell off one wrist. The child cried and cried until it was restored," fearing its lost khwan would attach itself elsewhere. The claiming set up kinship as a contract before witnesses. Whoever announced responsibility for the child's care, and this was usually the mother, deserved reciprocal care in old age. Other relatives would also help to bring him through to maturity. He would not be so frightened of an evil spirit because of family support, nor of the "ghost of an ancestor" who would be recognized as a relative.

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Third, the ceremony strengthened the child. By giving him through the ties a stable khwan, he "grew better, cried less, and did not get sick."

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The incorporation of as many auspicious elements as possible into the ritual was customary. Since the child took

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44. A winnowing tray (basket) had the capacity to "trap" spirits. It could seize or trap not only the khwan soul, but, at New Year's, one of the fun ghosts (Textor:371).

45. There is no convenient way of expressing "oure" in Thai in this restricted sense (id.).

852 after whoever claimed him, a mother might ask a "wealthy
856 person, of polite, calm, and good character" to do this.
789 The baby also started an association with whatever items were placed on his tray with him. Besides the most common ones mentioned in Nūan's tale were ink and books (which induced learning), gold, rings, jewelry, money (wealth); bergamot thorn, a tin of kaffir lime (sharp wit); and a razor (a good wood-cutter for the fire; said to be a Muslim custom). When the baby was finally transferred from tray
852 to cradle these items were returned to household use. The
789 bamboo cutter, rhizome of phlai, and earth associated with cutting the cord were taken off the tray and buried with the placenta. Their significance lay as part of a binding ritual. The phlai and earth might be taken off ahead of time.

Binding Rituals

829 Because Bang Chan accorded autonomy to every individ-
774 ual, whatever his age, everyone had the free choice to go wherever his advantage lay. In infancy and childhood, the khwan soul might flee at any time, and could only be re-
[852] captured by a khwan-calling or khwan-ladling rite (Textor: 396-411). After about the age of 8, a thaam khwan ceremony helped to bind in and strengthen the khwan soul. In daily life, the fear that a loved one, whatever his age, would withdraw or run away if unhappy, frightened, or over-
829 burdened dogged people their whole lives. Casual episodes
593 were sometimes viewed with alarm. Once a boy of 10 on his own initiative went off to live a few days with his grandmother only 10 minutes away by boat. His mother complained that he had wandered (pai thiaw) and feared it would become a habit. Parents dreaded that grown children would find work away from the village; that daughters would elope; that adopted children or spouses run away; or even that their child, at marriage, would elect to go live with his in-laws. At any time a husband might go into the priesthood leaving his wife and children to fend for themselves, though here the wife had to give her permission and the motive was sympathetically viewed.

A traditional jesting threat was to "go away to the jungle-forest" (pai pā).

The economic and social base for this fear of losing a child to the world was that children were a parental investment with an anticipated return: for the trouble of bearing and raising them, children should work for the family until their marriage. Furthermore, a boy was to bring his parents merit by being ordained, while a girl was to care for them in their old age. If a child moved away

562 [827] [853] delivery, "her blood was purified to a white color to become the milk of the breast."[48] Nursing a child was the essence of a woman's function, the supremely feminine act. A priest said, "A mother mercifully receives the khwan into her womb, and for maintaining life gives more of her own body, strength, and care (i.e. than does the father). Mothers are born to love children. Theirs is a steady intent to provide children with successful existences. To a mother one is most grateful" (S.S.).

562 462 252 224 [082] [431] [796] In a wider context, not only all their household members but people anywhere were the objects of women's nurture: women were in charge of the cooking even if occasionally helped by men. At the meals they prepared they were often the last to eat, so often "holding back and eating whatever was left over," that in a poor household, short rationing daily was probable (Hauck, et al. 45,49). One old lady expressed deep satisfaction that she "did not feel hungry any more." She construed this as proof that she had ample merit, but it also meant that she was a great donor who gave continuously and took little. Women usually offered the early morning food to priests in behalf of the family, and they took charge of cooking the immense amount of food served at large ceremonies and temple festivities. When age pushed women past their mature capacities, they returned to the status of recipients. A son said of his senile mother, "She has gone back to being a child" (klap pai pen dek). The son's wife cooked delicacies for her.

562 857 [291] [593] A desire to give tender care and nourishment was deemed inborn in all women. Although sex was not strongly differentiated in babyhood,[49] by age 3 a hard-to-handle skirt was put on a tiny girl, who reacted with vast pride. By 5, girls were helping with cooking and baby tending. Often has an older sister of 9 or 12 been observed patiently feeding her charge the ice cream she longed to eat herself.

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[822] 48. This very phrase was congruent with the colors associated with the khwan. Red or white flags, or pieces of cloth, or puddings (khanom) were required wherever khwan were involved, such as in rice, san phra phum, and tham khwan ceremonies. Red was an auspicious color, white symbolized innocence and purity.

[856] 49. Anuman Rajadhon reports, though, that at the moment of birth, the child's sex was immediately "adjusted" (Anuman Rajadhon:127).

Only when the youngster was satiated did she gobble the remainder.[50] Parents often commented that girls in general were obedient and good, but boys were not. Everyone spoke, however, of exceptions. The capacity to play the female role grew with the child. It was not completed with the physiological maturity of first menstruation but only with ritual maturity.

The rituals to fit a woman for her office, described as "directly related to the welfare of the child," had 4 specific purposes. They perfected her as a compassionate being; restored and strengthened her body; improved her capacities as a nourisher; and strengthened her own khwan. The key to each of these aims was the holy fire.[51] Because actions taken by the fire were immediately and permanently effective, every effort was made to induce auspicious happenings. Words spoken by the fire had compelling effect so even ordinary speech became magical. Speaking of the fire's hotness so raised its heat that a mother was burned. For this reason, uninformed or careless visitors like children or foreigners were a danger.

According to Buddhist thinking, suffering developed compassion. Through the discomfort of pregnancy, followed by the anguish of childbirth and the heat of the fire, a woman became compassionate and so achieved the guide-line for moral behavior. Then a woman was sure to be touched with pity for the younger or less fortunate. One teacher despite the inconvenience went home twice a day from school to nurse her new baby because she "pitied" him too much to hire a wet-nurse. It was "pitiful" to see a child at another woman's breast for it implied that its mother was either unwilling or unable to nurse it. Thus, babies were rarely nursed by others than their own mothers.

The fire also strengthened a woman by ridding her of bad blood and foul fluids. Wind and Fire, the 2 spirit guardians of the elements necessary to the occasion, were invoked to assist in the drying of the uterus. In addition, strengthening

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50. Boys too fed their younger siblings but their purpose was a power-play: "to assure obedience in the future" (cf. Hanks and Phillips:648).

51. This fire was kept entirely separate from the one for cooking and boiling of water. It was ritually lit and ritually extinguished at the end of the fire-rest.

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Thus she performed several rites involving the maintenance of the immature khwan of children and of rice.[54]

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The acme of maternal virtues was manifested in the "good nourishers" (lĭang dĭ). These women had borne many children who "nursed and slept well, did not cry, and easily established good habits." They were lĭang dĭ not just because of the time spent by the fire, for that time could be matched by persons who had lost babies. They were special persons of more than usual capacities for success in nurture. Good to have around for their auspicious influence, they were called upon to inaugurate or help processes concerned with health and growth. They performed, or caught the child in the winnowing ceremony, or gave babies their first suck. They were the persons to whom a sickly child was brought so that his health might be improved by calling the soul and tying holy cord at wrist and ankle (riak khwan). [755] [774]

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54. If a child indfcated by continuous crying that he had lost his khwan, a mature (suk) woman had to be asked to call it back ritually and re-tie it into the body with sacred cord at wrist and ankle. There was no special magic. Her words suffice. Khwan-ladling, a more elaborate and compelling form of the same ceremony, used magical formulae (Textor:401-402). One of Phillips' sentence-completion tests was, "If one is frightened, the best thing to do is..." Of the respondents, 7 women, including one Muslim, would set to work to "call back the khwan" (Phillips:267-268). No man suggested the latter. 562 774 789

In the agricultural rites, women handled the rice's khwan in basically the same way when it was immature: inviting the young Rice Goddess to stay and grow in the field, and transporting to the house the child-like seed that only next year would grow to maturity. For these rites a woman used an incantation if she knew one. That she could also handle the rice khwan by speaking "extemporaneously" (Textor:429), indicated that her mere words were enough. If no one else were available, a non-suk woman could call the khwan of a child or of the Rice Mother by reason of her in-born female potency, but could not "ladle" a khwan. 562 243 789

When the khwan was mature (after a person was about age 10) men took over its care. In the men's thaw khwan (khwan-strengthening) rite, here, too, women were the ones to carry off the cloth-and-leaf covering of the baisĭ (tiered offering) into which the khwan had flitted during the ceremony. The rice-ceremony at the threshing floor was a thaw khwan, so was performed by men. 562 774 856 [243]